

Historic Preservation Design Review

April 26, 2012

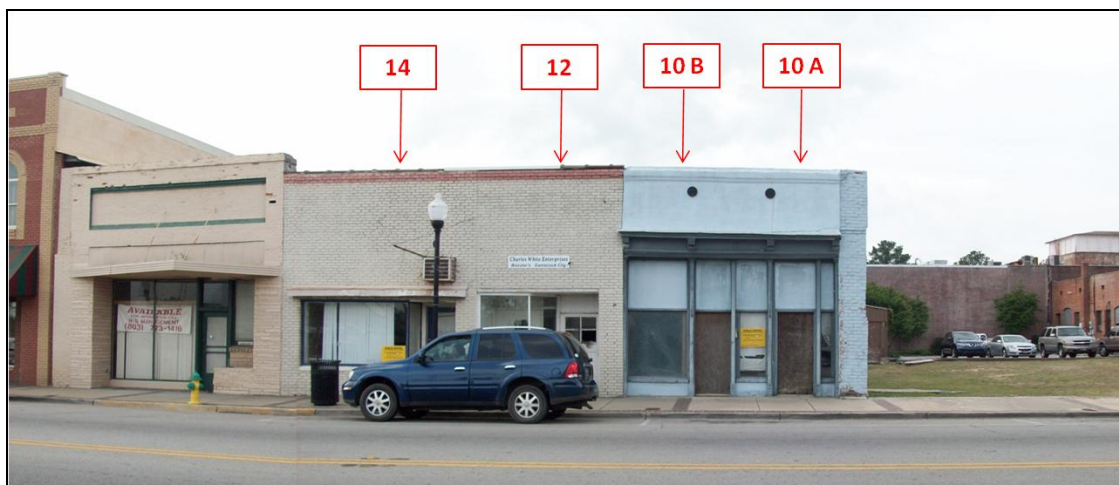
HP-12-12, 10 A&B, 12 and 14 E. Liberty St. (City)

I. THE REQUEST

Applicant:	Julie Coker, City of Sumter
Status of the Applicant:	Representative for the Property Owner
Request:	Historic Preservation Design Review approval to demolish three (3) buildings in the Central Business District (CBD)
Location:	10 A&B, 12 and 14 E. Liberty St.
Present Use/Zoning:	Vacant Structures/CBD
Tax Map Reference:	228-13-07-068, 228-13-07-069, 228-13-07-070, and 228-13-07-032
Adjacent Property Land Use and Zoning:	North – E. Liberty St. South – Commercial Structure & Public Parking Lot/CBD East – Vacant Commercial Building/CBD West – Rotary Centennial Plaza/CBD

II. BACKGROUND

The applicant is requesting design review approval to demolish the two structures identified as 10 A&B, 12, and 14 E. Liberty St. east of the intersection of Main St. and Liberty St. The existing structures shown in the photograph below are two separate structures located on four (4) individual parcels. Each building has two tenant spaces as identified below.



Site and Situation:

As shown in the Orthophotography to the right, the two structures are sited on the south side of E. Liberty St. +/-210 ft. east of the intersection of Main St. and Liberty St.

Both buildings have been identified and inventoried in both the 1985 Downtown Historic Resources Survey, and in the 2010 Historic Resources Survey.

Architectural & Historic Significance:

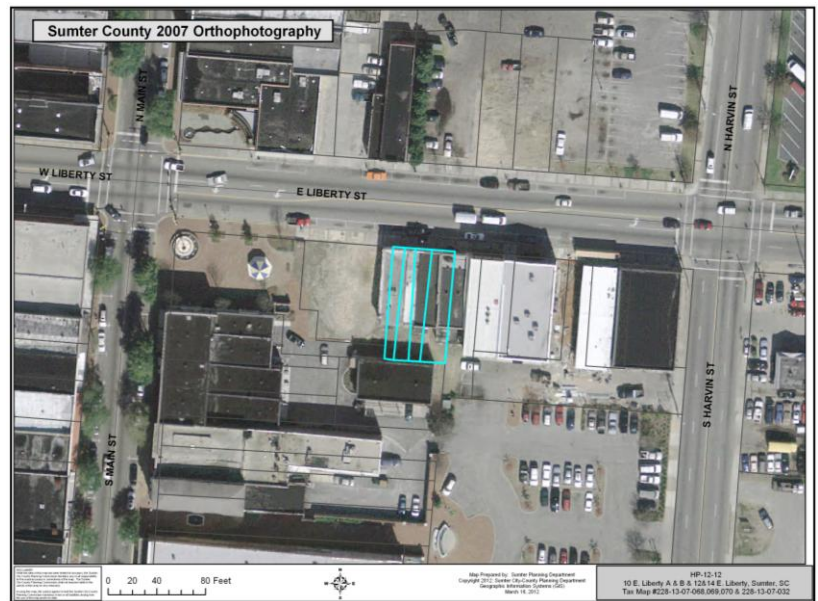
10 A&B E. Liberty St. –

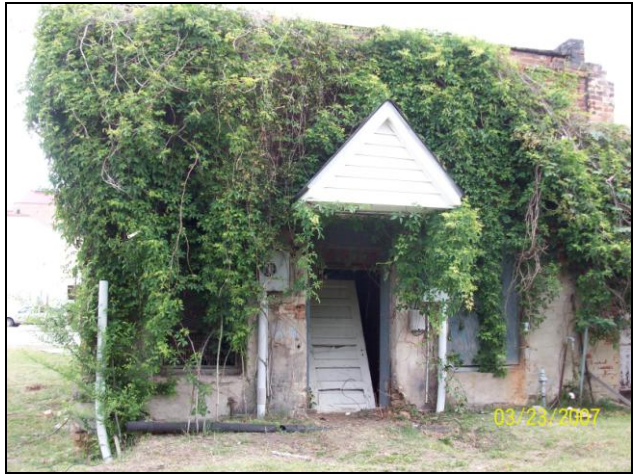
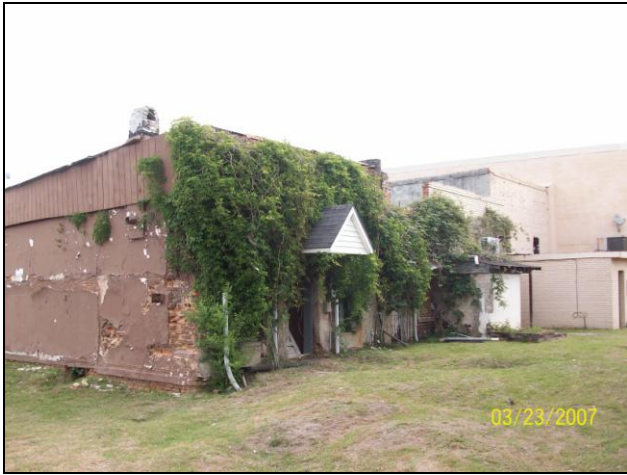
The building is a rectangular, masonry, one storey structure. The front façade has been altered with a glass storefront with two centralized entrance doors—one door accesses each tenant space. Based on the 1985 resources survey, the structure was constructed circa 1890. Construction dating is based on Sanborn Fire Insurance Rate Maps. Its historical significance is based on the structure's affiliation with a music store that was housed in this location in 1904. The building has no distinct identified architectural style and the existing building façade is not original to the structure.

12-14 E. Liberty St. –

The building is a rectangular, masonry, one storey structure with two vertical bays. The structure has no decorative features. Based on the 1985 historic resources survey, the structure was constructed circa 1919. Construction dating is based on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Rate Maps. The building's only historical significance is that it appears in the Sanborn maps in 1923. The building has no distinct architectural style and the existing building façade has been altered. The structure has also had a rear addition added.

The following photographs show the current exterior condition of both structures. Due to structural safety concerns interior photos have not been provided:







Design review approval is required prior to being issued a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for demolition. When reviewing a demolition request, the Zoning Ordinance and the Design Review Guidelines Manual both speak to general review criteria.

The *City of Sumter Zoning & Development Standards Ordinance* states:

1.o.4. Where a request for a demolition permit is involved in an application for a certificate of appropriateness, the Design Review Board may postpone the issuance of a demolition permit for one hundred twenty (120) days pending a thorough review of the matter. An extension of an additional one hundred twenty (120) days may be authorized when the Design Review Board is reasonably certain that an alternative to demolition can be achieved during the additional time period. The Design Review Board shall provide a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council when it is in the public interest to save vulnerable architectural, cultural, and/or archaeological resources which would be damaged or lost by the demolition or partial demolition or the moving of a building or structure.

Section 1.o.4. gives the Board the option of postponing the issuance of a COA for 120 days, with an optional 120 day extension, in order to protect a vulnerable historic property. However, this structure is not historic and is considered to be an intrusive structure within the District.

The *Design Review Guidelines Manual* states:

#97) HISTORIC BUILDINGS SHOULD NOT BE DEMOLISHED

Normally Required

- a. Historic buildings in Sumter's districts should not be demolished. Demolition may only be approved if one or more of the following conditions are met:**

- Where the public safety and welfare requires the removal of a structure or building.**

The Building Office has signed individual demolition orders for each of the three structures based on evidence of significant structural deterioration and the structures posing a public safety hazard. Copies of the individual orders have been attached to this report.

- **Where economic hardship has been demonstrated, proven, and accepted by the Board of Historical Review.**

No evidence has been submitted by the applicant that indicates there is an economic hardship.

- **Where the structural instability or deterioration of a property is demonstrated through a report by a structural engineer or architect. Such a report must clearly detail the property's physical condition, reasons why rehabilitation is not feasible, and cost estimates for rehabilitation versus demolition. In addition to this report there should be a separate report that details future action on the site.**

No documentation has been submitted that demonstrates the structural instability of this building from a structural engineer or architect however the Building Official has deemed both structures to be unsafe and has ordered demolition because they pose a public safety hazard and are unfit for human occupancy.

- **Where buildings have lost their original architectural integrity and no longer contribute to the character of the district.**

In 1985, both structures were considered to be contributing to the district based on age, but not due to any distinct architectural elements. Based on the 1985 Main Street Sumter Survey Report, these structures have no distinct architectural style and no longer retain the original façade elements—they have lost their original architectural integrity

- **After a 120-day waiting period imposed by the Historic Preservation Design Review Committee to determine if the building could be saved by others.**

The 120 day waiting period is meant to give others the opportunity to save historic buildings. These structures pose an immediate threat to public safety as evidenced by the Demolition Orders signed by the Building Office.

Section 1.k.2 of the City Zoning Ordinance speaks to the intent of the Downtown Historic District Overlay. Based on 1.k.2, the overlay district is intended to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public by providing a mechanism for the identification, recognition, preservation, maintenance, protection and enhancement of existing historic and architecturally valuable structures, properties, and neighborhoods which serve as a visible reminder of the social, cultural, economic, political, and/or architectural history of the City of Sumter.

When a demolition request for a structure within the overlay district is brought forward, it is both the Planning Department Staff and the Design Review Committee's responsibility to understand the impact that granting such a request will have on the district and the community as a whole. In addition to the demolition review conditions outlined in the Design Review Guidelines Manual, other issues to consider should include how the structure's site and setting impact its practical future and the architectural and historic significance of the structure to the community. Both structures have no distinct architectural style nor do they retain their original façade elements. In addition, they pose a documented threat to public safety and have been deemed unsafe for human occupation.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff has reviewed this request in accordance with the design guidelines. Staff recommends approval of this request.

IV. DRAFT MOTIONS

I move that the Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Committee approve HP-12-12, in accordance with the photographs and Demolition Orders issued by the Sumter City-County Building Official submitted and referenced in the Staff Report and based on compliance with Design Review Guidelines #97 and Section 1.o.4 of the City of Sumter – Zoning & Development Standards Ordinance.

V. HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGN REVIEW – APRIL 26, 2012

The Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Committee at its meeting on Thursday, April 26, 2012, voted to approve this request in accordance with the photographs and Demolition Orders issued by the Sumter City-County Building Official submitted and referenced in the Staff Report and based on compliance with Design Review Guidelines #97 and Section 1.o.4 of the City of Sumter – Zoning & Development Standards Ordinance.